

MINUTES  
San Bernardino County  
MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION PUBLIC SESSION  
November 5, 2009; 12:00-2:00 pm  
BHRC - 850 E. Foothill Blvd, F119-120  
Rialto, CA 92376

**Commissioners Present:**

David Ford, Gabriel Gonzales, Susan McGee-Stehsel, Tom Rivera, May Farr, Veatrice Jews, Jane Godager, Jane Mercer, Tanya Perry and Talli Simmons on behalf of Supervisor Neil Derry.

**Excused Absence:**

Michael Hill, Monica Alonso, Bill Swift, and Christopher Massa

**Guests:**

Allan Rawland, Director, Debi Pasco, Clerk of the Mental Health Commission; Michael Townsend, Field Representative for Supervisor Josie Gonzales, Monica Wilson PhD, Mental Health Planning Council; Linda Hart, African American Coalition, Ernesto Beunrostro, Alex Fajardo, Josie L. Bender, El Sol Neighborhood Education Center; Christine Bierdrager PhD, Inland Behavioral Health Services; Rodolfo Pinon, Casa De San Bernardino; Gwen Knotts, Knott's Family Institute; Armando Ontivros, EMQ; Dawn Peria, Cyndee Elwood, Y. Boudeviue, Steven Garrett and father, Debbie Reno-Smith, Phillis Dumas, C.J. Cook, Victor Community Support Services; Faith Ikeda, Pathways to Recovery; Wayne Henkelman, Teri Posey, San Bernardino Mental Health Courts; Veronica Kelley, Dennis Terrones, Yvonne Amador; André Bossieux, J. Rich, Mariann Ruffolo, Michael Oliver, Lauretta Ross, Doris Turner, Andy Gruchy, Tim Hougén, Lynn Neuenswander, Lisa McGinnis, Bob Sudol, Maria Coronado, Doug Fazekas, and Gary Atkins DBH.

**CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS AND MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING**

Chairperson David Ford called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. He welcomed everyone and self introductions followed.

The agenda for this meeting was approved. The minutes from the October 1, 2009 Mental Health Commission Public Session were adopted as written after correction: Tanya Perry's name was removed from "Commissioners Present" and added to "Excused Absence".

**CULTURAL COMPETENCY AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

Veronica Kelley, DBH Cultural Competency Officer, presented Stephen Garrett, Clinical Supervisor, Victor Community Support Services, with the November 2009 Cultural Competency Award of Excellence. Stephen has worked for Victor Community Support Services for two years. He supervises Therapeutic Behavioral Services and Intensive programs, and facilitates the Cultural Competency workgroup.

**Nomination:**

"Stephen runs the Cultural Competency group in the High Desert, Victorville. He is very focused on quality and is always cognizant of the needs of the diverse consumers and families he serves." Congratulations, Stephen!

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Linda Hart, African American Mental Health Coalition, thanked the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) for working with the Coalition to establish several programs. The African American Mental Health Coalition was recently awarded a statewide grant for a study in San Bernardino County to define and develop policies for access to DBH.

Gwen Knotts, Director, Knotts Family Institute, stated that it is wonderful working together with DBH staff members to reduce stigma in our communities.

## **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chairperson David Ford stated that the DBH Annual Report is a work of art and a tribute to all the work we do.

Allan recognized Lynn Neuenswander, Public Information Office, and staff for bringing it all together.

## **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

### **First District:**

Commissioner Gabriel Gonzales stated that the Victor Valley Clubhouse had a very successful Halloween party with games, prizes and decoration. He Chaired the First District Advisory Committee in October. Laurreta Ross, Peer and Family Advocate, encouraged Gabriel to share his experience of growing up gay with mental illness at a recent "Us + Them = We: Recovery, Resiliency and Transormation" training. Gabriel would like to share his story during the Special Presentation segment at an upcoming Mental Health Commission meeting. Debi Pasco will add Consumer Experiences to the 2010 Special Presentation list.

### **Second District:**

Commissioner May Farr announced that the CA Mental Health Planning Council is recruiting for a Transitional Age Youth (TAY) to participant.

### **Third District:**

Commissioner Tom Rivera was so impressed by the October 7<sup>th</sup> Promotoras de Salud presentation at the Mental Health Commission that he was motivated to attend one of their meetings on October 21<sup>st</sup>, along with staff from the Office of Cultural Competency, Veronica Kelley, Michael Knight and Maribel Gutierrez. Minutes were available in English and Spanish and the pozole was delicious!

### **Fourth District:**

Commissioner Jane Mercer works full time assisting mentally ill homeless individuals in the Ontario area. She works closely with the Ontario Health Center, which is within walking distance of Tent City, to obtain the psychiatrist report that is necessary for clients to obtain SSI. Most recently, four residents of Tent City who are now receiving SSI, joined together to purchase a modular home.

### **Fifth District:**

Commissioner Jane Godager stated that she was pleased when Supervisor Gonzales' office responded with a public hearing in her neighborhood regarding the demolition of the old Juvenile Hall on Gilbert Street. She also attended the October session of the CA Senior Legislature trying to eliminate Board and Care homes from becoming the SSI Payee for their residents.

Commissioner Susan McGee-Stehsel announced that the nominating committee has received numerous award nominations forms and are in the process of selecting the recipients for the 2009 Holiday Tea and Awards Ceremony scheduled for Thursday, December 3, 2009. She also encouraged the audience to be mindful of simple techniques that greatly reduce the spread of the flu/H1N1 virus; frequent handwashing and coughing/sneezing into your elbow instead of your hand.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Rawland announced the October 27<sup>th</sup> appointment of Monica Alonso by Supervisor Paul Biane to serve on the Mental Health Commission, Second District. We have confirmation from Supervisor Gary Ovitts' office that Dr. Roberto Casas will be appointed to a serve on the Fourth District within the next two weeks.

Director Rawland congratulated Commissioner May Farr for her appointment to the CA National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Board of Directors.

Veronica Kelley and her family have been recognized by Orange County for their work in the community.

The CA External Quality Review Board (CAEQRO) canceled their on-site visit in November 2009 as the County of San Bernardino was recognized as one of the State's top performers.

The Open House of the new DBH Training Institute will be held on December 8 from 1:00-4:00 pm.

### **(Mental Health Services Act) MHSA Update**

We will receive \$8.9 million funding for MHSA Capital Facilities which is earmarked to renovate the One Stop Transitional Age Youth Center on Gilbert Street in San Bernardino and the addition of a Crisis Residential Program. We received \$13 million for MHSA Technological Needs which will be used for our new Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system.

The MHSA Innovation Plan will be presented to the Mental Health Commission at the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, which will be held at the new DBH Training Institute.

### **FY 2009-2010 State and County Budget**

The State budget is faced with an additional \$8-10 billion shortfall that will roll into next year; which means DBH is looking at \$3 million in reductions.

The County of San Bernardino is experiencing a 14-15% unemployment rate.

- Sales tax and vehicle license fees have decreased 16%
- MHSA projected 15% decrease next year

FY 11-12: DBH may need to use our Prudent Reserve. We are being proactive and working with contractors to save funding.

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Latino Health Collaborative Disparities Access Study**

Veronica Kelley, Cultural Competency Officer, stated that the MHSA funded Disparities Access Study was a very important project to identify barriers that prevent African Americans, Latinos and Asian Pacific Islanders from seeking mental health services in San Bernardino County. Ms. Kelley introduced Dr. Ed McField, Executive Director, Latino Health Collaborative, the lead agency for the study, with assistance from Promotores de Salud.

Dr. McField stated that the key strategy was to engage Promotores to reach out within their natural habitat and among their own ethnicity to link community members to resources. Findings included:

- no idea that mental health services were available
- high levels of stigma within the community
- apprehensive to share experiences
- in some cases people were unaware they were living with someone with a mental illness

Barriers expressed across by all ethnic groups include:

- lack of openness and trust
- lack of insurance, high cost, negative interactions with mental health staff
- importance of faith and church
- expressed need for advocates in the community
- embarrassment

#### Recommendations:

- identify client challenges: language, transportation, etc.
- client social support
- acculturation
- stigma
- explain mental illness: lack of knowledge

Increasing access to services does not increase the use of services.

Linda Hart asked Director Rawland how DBH will incorporate these recommendations. *Director Rawland responded, "DBH will incorporate recommendations into our MHSA Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI), Innovation and Transformation plans." He also mentioned that any survey generates more questions; however the data will be helpful in meeting the needs of our communities.*

It was recommended that an Access Study Implementation committee be created, with participants from the Mental Health Commission, DBH staff and contractor providers in January 2010.

#### **OUTSIDE AGENCY REPORTS**

No comments provided.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Present 2010 Slate of Officers – One of the nominees was out of state on vacation and not yet consulted of their intent to run for a 2010 officer position; therefore this item was deferred until the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### **DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DAC) REPORTS**

##### **District 1:**

Commissioner Gabriel Gonzales chaired the October DAC meeting for the first time. The Victor Valley Clubhouse has signed up 29 members to participate in the November 7<sup>th</sup> NAMI Walk and may need an additional van to transport everyone.

##### **District 5:**

There was no October meeting due to scheduling issues.

Director Rawland stated that the DACs are struggling due to scheduling issues; however we will continue to work on challenges.

Commissioner McGee-Stehsel suggested that it may be useful to use a webinar system.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Being no further items to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

---

David Ford  
Chairperson

---

Debi Pasco  
Clerk of the Mental Health Commission